

City of Detroit


CITY COUNCIL

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TO: The Honorable Detroit City Council

FROM: David Whitaker 
Research & Analysis Division Staff

DATE: January 5, 2010

RE: **WATER & SEWERAGE SLUDGE ISSUES**

The Research & Analysis Division (RAD) was requested by this Honorable Body to report on allegations that raw sewerage/sludge has contaminated the City's fresh water supply for the past two (2) months. According to the Detroit Water & Sewerage Department (DWSD), no reports or complaints have been received of sludge entering the fresh water supply and its presence has not been detected in samples. DWSD also stated that all sludge from the filtration process is either incinerated or taken off-site for disposal.

Raw sewerage may be discharged directly into the Detroit or Rouge Rivers only when large amounts of storm water enter the sewer systems during periods of heavy rains or snow melt. Devices known as combined sewer overflow (CSO) systems control this discharge. These systems are regulated by the State of Michigan.

The department representative indicated a willingness to provide additional information upon receipt of more specific details of the alleged incidents such as dates or areas affected.

CC Y. Stephens ✓
JPastula ✓

City of Detroit
CITY COUNCIL

JOANN WATSON
COUNCIL MEMBER

draft
for your urgent
review and
response

December 8, 2009

To: Mayor Dave Bing
Council President Kenneth Cockrel
Council President-Elect Charles Pugh
Krystal Crittendon, Corporation Counsel
David Whitaker, Director of RAD
Pamela Turner, Director of Water and Sewerage Department
Mary E. Blackmon, Chair of Board of Water Commissioners
William Ridella, Deputy Director Health and Wellness Department
Edith Killens, Director Wayne County Health Department

From: Councilmember JoAnn Watson

Re: Request for an urgent response to grave reports from four credible sources that raw sewerage/sludge has contaminated Detroit's fresh water for the past two months

I have received alarming reports that there are serious failures in the systems which should be – but reportedly are not – filtering sludge from Detroit's water system. I request that the City Council and the Research and Analysis Division immediately investigate these allegations. I further recommend that the Executive Branch consider an investigation as well to avert a major health crisis.

I highly recommend that *urgent remediate* action be taken to purchase and install waste treatment filtering presses via emergency contracts, and that state and federal monitors be called immediately, in addition to issuing an advisory report to Judge Feikens to advise him of the risks, and the resolution involved with this issue.

Finally, I request that DWSD, RAD and Law present timelines and monitoring accountability bench marks to City Council.

12/9/09